

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08557 151835Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-05
OES-07 DODE-00 ERDA-05 SS-15 SP-02 PA-01 USIA-06
PRS-01 /108 W

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R 151211Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4103
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 8557

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: TECH MNUC PFOR IN
SUBJ: INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY: DISCUSSIONS DURING
COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS' CONFERENCE; CONFERENCE
ON FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION

1. SEVERAL ITEMS IN THE DELHI PRESS ON JUNE 15 SUGGEST
THAT THERE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPMENTS IN LONDON AND ELSE-
WHERE RELEVANT TO OUR NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOI.
WE HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT, LONDON AND OTTAWA MAY BE
ABLE TO SHED FURTHER LIGHT ON THESE SUBJECTS.

2. A LONDON DATELINED STORY FROM THE INDIAN PRESS
SERVICE, SAMACHAR, REPORTED THAT PRIME MINISTER DESAI
HAD AT LEAST THREE MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER CALLAHAN
AND TWO WITH CANADIAN PREMIER TRUDEAU DURING WHICH
INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY WAS DISCUSSED. THE STORY REPORTED
THAT TRUDEAU'S POSITION HAD SOFTENED AND HE HAD PRO-
MISED TO WORK FOR EARLY RECONCILIATION AND POSSIBLE
RESUMPTION OF NUCLEAR COOPERATION. CANADA'S POSITION
OF SAFEGUARDS HAD, HOWEVER, REMAINED "HARD." THE STORY
FURTHER REPORTED THAT DESAI WAS PREPARED TO MAKE AN
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 08557 151835Z

ADVANCE IN HIS POSITION REGARDING SAFEGUARDS BUT WOULD
NOT COMPROMISE ON NPT. WE WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER
READOUT CAN BE OBTAINED ON THESE DISCUSSIONS. WE ARE
ALSO SEEKING INFORMATION FROM THE BRITISH AND CANADIAN
HIGH COMMISSIONS HERE.

3. THE SAMACHAR STORY ALSO STATES THAT DESAI IN HIS

DISCUSSIONS AT LONDON POINTED OUT THAT ANY ACCEPTANCE BY INDIA OF IAEA SAFEGUARDS WOULD PROBABLY MEAN "IRREPARABLE LOSS OF TIME" FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER THOMSON HAD PREVIOUSLY REPORTED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT THIS WAS DESAI'S VIEW. WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO OUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GOI THAT WE BE IN A POSITION TO DEAL WITH THIS CLAIM. IT WAS THOMSON'S VIEW THAT DESAI HAD REACHED HIS OPINION ON THE BASIS OF LIMITED OR EVEN NO TECHNICAL INFORMATION. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING THE BEST POSSIBLE INFORMATION ON THE VALIDITY OF THIS LINE OF ARGUMENT. WOULD INDIAN NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT BE SLOWED AND IF SO, BY HOW MUCH?

4. THE PRESS ON JUNE 14 ALSO CARRIED STORIES REPORTING THAT INDIA WAS ONE OF 30 NATIONS WHICH WAS TO BE INVITED TO A CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES. WE PRESUME THAT THIS CONFERENCE WILL CONSIDER THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM BUT WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION, PARTICULARLY THAT WHICH WE CAN PASS TO THE GOI, ON THE SUBJECT.

5. SOME OF THE ABOVE MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING BETWEEN DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY NYE AND FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA IN LONDON ON JUNE 10. WE HOPE THAT WE MAY HAVE A READOUT ON THIS MEETING BY THE TIME FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA RETURNS TO DELHI ON JUNE 17. GOHEEN

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